

Contributions.

THE NEW YEAR.

BY SAMANTHA WHIPPLE SHOUP.

UNTRIED, unknown and fair,
With deep, mysterious eyes and starwreathed hair,
Untouched by any breath of sin or shame,
Undimmed by care the brow's white flame,
The New Year meets us, face to face,
Laden with gifts of grace:
The wealthy hours, with unknown blessings
fraught,
Fair space for earnest toil and fruitful thought,
For kindly word and generous deed,
For binding up the hearts that bleed,
For conquering self and sin,
For waxing strong within.

Alas! all pale and cold,
Mid drifting snows, withered and shrunk and old,
We see the Old Year's sad, accusing ghost,
Laden with treasures we have lost:
The wasted hours, the deeds unwrought,
The idle word and thought,
The waiting good wherein we weakly failed,
Sharp tests of life, where strength or courage
quailed;

The gracious toil we might have shared,
The lost for whom we might have cared—
Sweet Heaven, how can we brook
The Old Year's ghostly look?

Ah let us gaze no more
On loss and failure that have gone before;
The future still hath space for truer life,
For generous deeds and noble strife;
The soul that cannot rise with wings
May climb to higher things.
And Thou, Almighty One in whom we trust,
Who still rememberest we are but dust,
Whose mercies all our sins outlast,
Lift from our hearts the heavy past,
That we may go with cheer
To meet the glad New Year.
Dubuque, Ia.

THE NEW YEAR.

Christmas gives us reason to observe the coming in of the new year. New Year Day itself, under that name, is indeed a secular holiday; and the custom of closing and opening new accounts in business at this time is, of course, something that touches us wholly on the secular side. The very word secular means, by its origin, things of time as distinguished from things of eternity; worldly things as distinguished from spiritual things. And measures of time and worldly affairs may indeed be noted without the least regard to eternal and spiritual interests. But, on the other hand, the coming of Christ into the world, "as at this time," that is, at least, as we commemorate it at this time—this, we say, is what gives Christian significance to the new year. The holiday week is but the prolongation of the festival itself. The Christian world would never have

adopted the calendar of the month of Janus as its secular dividing point, would never have accepted the day from Roman civilization with such heartiness, if it had not followed immediately upon the celebration of the birth of Christ.

How, then, should Christians regard the New Year? What thoughts should especially occupy them at this season? The voice of Christian devotion, in the Christmas collect already quoted from, prays that we "may daily be renewed." The collect for the day itself reminds us how the infant Savior became "obedient to the law of man," and asks that "we may in all things obey God's blessed will." Here is suggestion enough for the profitable, spiritual observance of the time. It is a day that asks the question, Whither? If a business man is to blame for not inquiring into his affairs at such a time, if every householder is bound, for his mere worldly honor, to know how he stands on such a day, are not we, who are called to live the life of eternity under the conditions of time, and with the aid of these present days and seasons of remembrance, are not we bound to consider how we are related to that new life of God in the world which began to be so abundantly and clearly seen when Christ was born? Are not we to blame if we do not consider whether we are ourselves in anywise renewed by it?

There is certainly danger of our being wholly occupied with almost anything else rather than with our part in the divine life. For what are we here? Is the whole object of our being in the world to gain or preserve our bodily health? It takes but a little fright or nervousness about health to make many a one think the care of it is not only his first, but his only duty. Or is it wealth? We all think we know enough of the subtle power of mammon to be on the watch against it; but do we not know and realize that no earthly power can deliver us from it? No power but that of God? Do we often say, with the Psalmist, "My goods are nothing unto Thee." Or is it modern science, or the wonderful material advances of our age, or its prodigious literature and multiplication of books,

old as well as new? Or is it the vogue of organization, by which the very church, as well as civil society in general, is turned into machinery? Or is it art, pure of applied, ideal or decorative? Among all these glammers and engrossments of the day, if, indeed, we have one thought of God, the time, the occasion that suggests it should be sacred to us. Let the New Year's Day be peculiarly a time of setting up the service of God among and above worldly things. Our need has been revealed by Advent self-examination. His bountiful grace is celebrated in Christmas rejoicings and communion. And now for the work! Another year with Christ on earth? The beginning of another decade, which is to close another century! For each of us the time is short; and we know not what ending our new beginnings of history may be in store for the whole world. What we do know is that without God our age is only the greatest creator of rubbish the world has yet seen; our papers and books, our wires and pipes, our iron and bricks, our fabrications of wood and straw, are but fuel for the burning and dust for the burying. The fair face of nature would be only the brighter without our modern appliances. But as the means of serving God the more expeditiously these things, and the knowledge and skill that underlie them, make ours the grandest age in which to witness for Christ and to further the upbuilding of his kingdom.—*Standard of the Cross.*

FAINT NOT.

The work of the child of God is often a work of weariness, and in the day of adversity he is in danger of fainting. But if he will draw near to God, and maintain his intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ, he need not faint, he need not fail. Strengthened by the power of God, filled with the courage of Him who did not strive nor cry, but who did not fail nor be discouraged, he may work the work of the Lord, believing on him whom he has sent, and at last be found of him in peace when he shall come in glory.

Faint not, Oh, weary heart! Be strong in God, the God of your salvation.